

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102:

Claims 36 and 42 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Clarke (United States Patent 5,139,334).

The applicant has cancelled claims 36 and 42.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103:

Claims 1-2, 10-12, 27-30, 35 and 40-41 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clarke in view of Yamaguchi et al (EP 714,025 A1).

The applicant has cancelled claims 1-2, 10-12, 27-30, 35 and 40-41.

Claim Objections:

Claims 3-9, 13-26, 31-34 and 38-39 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 3 has been rewritten in independent form. In particular, amended claim 3 includes all of the limitations of independent claim 1 and claim 2. Claim 3 has been further amended to correct minor grammatical errors and various antecedence errors. No new matter has been added. The applicant respectfully submits that amended claim 3 is now in allowable form. Claims 4 and 5, which depend directly from amended claim 3, are also believed to be in proper form for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is kindly requested.

Claim 6 has been rewritten in independent form. In particular, amended claim 6 includes all of the limitations of independent claim 1 and claim 2. Claim 6 has been further amended to correct minor grammatical errors and various antecedence errors. No new matter has been added. The applicant respectfully submits that amended claim 6 is now in allowable form. Favorable reconsideration is kindly requested.

Claim 7 has been rewritten in independent form. In particular, amended claim 7 includes all of the limitations of independent claim 1 and claim 2. Claim 7 has been further amended to correct minor grammatical errors and various antecedence errors. No new matter has been added. The applicant respectfully submits that amended claim 7 is now in allowable form. Claims 8 and 9, which depend directly from amended claim 7, are also believed to be in proper form for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is kindly requested.

Claim 13 has been rewritten in independent form. In particular, amended claim 13 includes all of the limitations of independent claim 11 and claim 12. Claim 13 has been further amended to correct minor grammatical errors and various antecedence errors. No new matter has been added. The applicant respectfully submits that amended claim 13 is now in allowable form. Claims 16-26, which depend either directly or indirectly from amended claim 13, are also believed to be in proper form for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is kindly requested.

Claim 14 has been rewritten in independent form. In particular, amended claim 14 includes all of the limitations of independent claim 11 and claim 12. Claim 14 has been further amended to correct minor grammatical errors. No new matter has been added. The applicant respectfully submits that amended claim 14 is now in allowable form. Claim 15, which depends directly from amended claim 14, is also believed to be in proper form for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is kindly requested.

Claim 31 has been rewritten in independent form. In particular, amended claim 31 includes all of the limitations of independent claim 27 and claim 29. No new matter has been added. The applicant respectfully submits that amended claim 31 is now in allowable form. Claims 32-34, which depends directly from amended claim 31, is also believed to be in proper form for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is kindly requested.

Claim 38 has been rewritten in independent form. In particular, amended claim 38 includes all of the limitations of independent claim 36 and claim 37. No new matter has been added. The applicant respectfully submits that amended claim 38 is now in

allowable form. Claim 39, which depends directly from amended claim 38, is also believed to be in proper form for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is kindly requested.

New claims 43 and 44 have been added to the application. An example of support for new claims 43 and 44 may be found in the application as originally filed at claims 28 and 30. The applicant respectfully submits that new claims 43 and 44, which depend directly from believed allowable claim 31, are also in proper form for allowance.

Allowable subject matter:

The applicant wishes to thank the examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter.

No new matter has been added in the amendments.

Please charge any additional fees required or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No: 50-1142.

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are now allowable, and Applicant requests reconsideration of the present application.

Respectfully,



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